



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*





*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*





**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*





*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*





#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**





More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*





**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*





*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*





#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**



More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*



**TESTIMONY OF ABE SCHUCHMAN, CEO, HOUSING UNLIMITED**  
**APRIL 19, 2022**

Good Afternoon Council President Alborno and Members of the County Council:

My name is Abe Schuchman and I am the CEO of Housing Unlimited, Inc. I also serve on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery Housing Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to submit this FY23 Budget testimony to the Montgomery County Council.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has, over the past 27 years, purchased 84 scattered-site homes and now serves 230 low income adults in mental health recovery in Montgomery County. Six out of ten new Housing Unlimited tenants come to us from Montgomery County homeless shelters. Yet with over 200 individuals on our waiting list, we know we have much still to do. Almost all of our homes are two-bedroom condos or three-bedroom townhomes. HUI believes strongly in a scattered-site, community integration approach and so our homes are located throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to Silver Spring. Our success is in no small part due to the extraordinary support that we have received from the Montgomery County government. With your help, HUI has become one of the largest providers of special needs housing in the County.

HUI has received wonderful support from Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HUI has greatly benefited from County acquisition and renovation loan funds, from our opportunity to purchase MPDUs, and from our tenants' ability to access shallow rent subsidies from the County's Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

In addition, once we acquire a house, the hard work of managing the house begins. The successful operation of HUI housing reflects an extraordinary collaboration amongst HUI, HHS and local psychiatric support service providers. HUI is fortunate that HHS' Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) conducts applicant screening for HUI. In addition, LBHA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone Montgomery to provide a house meeting facilitator as an option available to tenants at all HUI homes. Moreover, CSA has entered into a contract with Cornerstone to also provide case management services to individuals who wish to be linked to professional support services in the County. In addition, the County's Crisis Center—the Mobile Crisis Team—provides emergency support services to persons at their residence.

**(OVER)**





More generally, I applaud the County Executive and County Council for your commitment to affordable housing. The proposed FY23 budget includes historic levels of funding for affordable housing. The FY23 capital and operating budgets include nearly \$140 million for a range of affordable housing needs reflecting the areas of: preservation and development, rent subsidy programs, down payment assistance, homelessness services spending, housing program grants, etc.

Nearly \$100 million\* of the \$140 million is for housing preservation and development. This includes \$40 million for the vitally important goal of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing.

Affordable housing needs are great. Real estate prices are rising. Construction and labor costs are rising. The proposed FY23 budget represents a critically important first step to begin to meaningfully address the County's affordable housing needs.

HUI housing represents the successful product of a true private-public partnership. Montgomery County Government has been a model partner in the quest to meet the critical supported housing needs of Montgomery County residents in mental health recovery. And from our end, you can continue to count on the hard work of HUI's Board of Directors and staff as well as the County residents and local businesses that contribute their time, goods, services, and money in support of HUI. Through our collective efforts, Montgomery County adults in mental health recovery will have the opportunity to live a life of independence and dignity.

Thank you.

*\*\$99.7 is the amount across capital and operating in spending for production and preservation.*

*The \$99.7 includes:*

- *\$14.75 million to HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$40.0 million new NOAH Capital Fund (FY22 supplemental)*
- *\$ 13.5 million for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$ 3.5 million rollover for HIF lending (FY23 operating)*
- *\$22.0 million HIF Capital Fund (AHAP) (FY23 CIP)*
- *\$ 6.0 million Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) (FY23 CIP)*



#### *BACKGROUND ON HOUSING UNLIMITED:*

*Housing Unlimited has developed an innovative model for addressing the housing crisis for adults in mental health recovery residing in Montgomery County by:*

- *Providing permanent, shared affordable housing opportunities*
- *Empowering people to live independently*
- *Helping people move from substandard housing, from homelessness, and from more supervised housing situations*
- *Helping people move from their aging parents' homes*
- *Providing advocacy, public education and community linkage; and*
- *Bringing persons who need housing together in partnerships*

*HUI was conceived in 1991 by members of the Alliance on Mental Illness of Montgomery County, MD (AMI), a 700-member non-profit counseling and advocacy group composed of family members of persons with mental illnesses. The AMI volunteer task force studied affordable housing options and developed interest in the benefits—economic and empowering—of separating housing from mental health services. With a seed grant from AMI and donations from interested individuals, HUI operations were launched in late 1994.*

*HUI's supported independent living housing model is rooted in the belief that by providing housing that is separate from a consumer's mental health services, HUI offers an adult in mental health recovery more choice of care givers and life styles and increased opportunities for building independent living skills. HUI is also founded on the premises that:*

- *Many adults in mental health recovery are capable of living on their own with desired supports;*
- *Most adults with psychiatric disabilities have very low incomes which severely limit their housing options;*
- *Adults in mental health recovery who are well enough to live independently when provided with their own homes are happier and become healthier;*
- *The best and most empowering housing opportunities are safe, clean, decent,*



*permanent, and operated by a housing entity independent from providers of other services, i.e.: physical health, mental health, vocational services; and*

- *Need for low-cost housing among people who have disabilities will continue.*

*Beginning in late 1994 with the purchase and management of one house serving five tenants, HUI today owns and manages 84 houses and serves 230 adults in mental health recovery (almost all of whom have incomes at or below 15% of area median income). We are proud that over 90% of our tenants pay their rent on time, contribute to the cleaning of the home, maintain respectful relations with their housemates and others, and sustain their housing and independence for a year or more. Nevertheless, the need is still great; HUI has over 200 persons currently on its waiting list. Over the next 12 to 24 months, HUI will purchase an additional six to eight homes that will serve an additional 15 to 20 adults with psychiatric disabilities utilizing state capital grants, County loans, and private donations.*

*In addition to providing affordable quality housing, HUI fosters successful tenant relations and tenant empowerment through HUI's Extra-Measure Management/ Tenant Empowerment programs and activities. HUI's Extra-Measure Property Management activities include initiatives such as: thorough review of the HUI lease with new tenants; regular weekly house visits by HUI staff and walk-through of each house's common areas; quarterly comprehensive walk-through of private bedrooms and individual tenant consultations; and special attention to property improvements in response to tenants' requests. Extra-Measure Management efforts also include periodic policy review/adjustments. For instance, in response to tenant/consumer requests to re-visit the "no-pet policy," HUI introduced a small, contained pet option (bird, gerbil, etc.) for all houses.*

*In the arena of Tenant Empowerment, a fundamental pillar of HUI's mission is to empower people to live independently. A very important element of independent living involves taking responsibility for the upkeep and quality of life of one's community. Many homeowners serve on neighborhood associations and condo and coop associations. Similarly, renters serve on tenant associations. To this end, the Board of Directors and staff of HUI desired to create opportunities for tenants to be a part of, and strengthen, the HUI housing community. As a result, the HUI Tenants Council, which includes representatives from HUI homes, was formed in the beginning of 2000 to provide tenants with an organized vehicle to address landlord-tenant matters and to enable tenants to share information and other resources amongst each other. The Council also plans projects and activities open to all tenants in order to build bonds of friendship and camaraderie.*